1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

159
[539] Wherever thou goest
There a fire flares up.
You are haunted by Saturn (ill luck)
So where art thou going?

This verse sums up the story of my life.

When I was in Balaghat I did not marry. I left work there and went on foot to Sukari to see my sister and stayed there for eight years. [836 848] In Gondia I kept a woman with me, but did not marry her, and had two children by her. From Sukari the four of us came by foot to Padriganj and from there bought tickets to return to Barela. We had but little money in hand, and although all our relatives were living together in Barela they would not take me back and I had to build a separate hut.

When I was ten or twelve years old I worked in the fort (Gun Carriage Factory, Jubbulpore) when its foundations were being built and for two years received four annas a day. Carrying dirt was my work at that time.

Just now, sir, I am very thin but before this I was very healthy and strong. Now I am working as a coolie and am settled here and hope never to leave Barela again. The woman I took to live with [163] me in Gondia is still with me and altogether she has given birth to seven children, five of them having died, two when they were quite old. My son is sick and often has fits.

[262] I have had a hard time in life. I have had no food and ate bread made of mango kernels and the flowers of the *semal* tree. And many other things which the ordinary man never eats. At the time of the great famine this was my lot. Rice was then four annas a seer, and we could not afford it. A few months ago I was very ill and we had [758] no money so my wife had to get roots and leaves from the jungle. When I am sick I am not able to work and we all suffer. I am ashamed to ask for help from any one. Three years ago we were both very ill and we simply closed the door and remained inside. Our relatives [602] didn't help us with either food or money, but both of us recovered.

[426] I have a debt of about Rs. 4 or 5 but never in my life have I taken a large loan. I never drink wine except when invited to some wedding festivities. I am not in this habit and know that it is not good to drink liquor. I don't know the disadvantages of drink because I don't drink. Of course this I know, that if you are intoxicated then anyone may come, kick you and rob you of what you may have on your person. There is loss of money too. The same money can be